

Procedure file

Basic information		
CNS - Consultation procedure Decision	1997/0204(CNS)	Procedure completed
Basic telecommunications services: résultats of the WTO negotiations		
Subject 3.30.03 Telecommunications, data transmission, telephone 6.20.01 Agreements and relations in the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO)		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	RELA External Economic Relations		25/02/1997
		GUE/NGL CASTELLINA Luciana	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
Council of the European Union	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs, Industrial Policy		03/09/1997
		PPE VON WOGAU Karl	
	DEVE Development and Cooperation		
Council of the European Union	Council configuration	Meeting	Date
	Development	2052	28/11/1997
	General Affairs	1984	20/01/1997
	General Affairs	1958	28/11/1996
	Telecommunications	1888	27/11/1995

Key events			
27/11/1995	Debate in Council	1888	
28/11/1996	Debate in Council	1958	
20/01/1997	Debate in Council	1984	
15/07/1997	Legislative proposal published	COM(1997)0368	Summary
15/09/1997	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
07/10/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
07/10/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A4-0305/1997	
22/10/1997	Decision by Parliament	T4-0493/1997	Summary

28/11/1997	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
28/11/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
18/12/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	1997/0204(CNS)
Procedure type	CNS - Consultation procedure
Procedure subtype	International agreement
Legislative instrument	Decision
Legal basis	EC before Amsterdam E 228-p3-a1
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	RELA/4/09253

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal		COM(1997)0368 OJ C 267 03.09.1997, p. 0080	15/07/1997	EC	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A4-0305/1997 OJ C 339 10.11.1997, p. 0006	07/10/1997	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T4-0493/1997 OJ C 339 10.11.1997, p. 0046-0057	22/10/1997	EP	Summary

Additional information

European Commission	EUR-Lex
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Final act

Decision 1997/838 OJ L 347 18.12.1997, p. 0045	Summary
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Basic telecommunications services: résultats of the WTO negotiations

OBJECTIVE: to approve, on behalf of the Community, the results of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on basic telecommunications services. **SUBSTANCE:** Following the negotiations between the Community and its WTO partners, a Fourth Protocol to the General Agreement on Trade in Services was concluded on 15.02.1997, as was a Ministerial Decision on Basic Telecommunications Services. A previous decision required the WTO partners to draw up schedules of specific commitments and exemptions regarding basic telecommunications services. All the partners, including the Community and its Member States, submitted these schedules to the WTO on 14.02.1997. The schedule represents the Community's commitments in this field. As regards the general substance of the commitments, the negotiations resulted in a level of commitments accounting for around 93% of the world market in basic telecommunications services. WTO members representing all continents made commitments on all basic telecommunications services subsectors, either immediately applicable or to be phased in. In addition, most schedules submitted by the partners contain additional commitments on regulatory principles. As regards the Community, the agreement allows the Union's telecommunications industries to benefit from greater legal certainty and predictability than previously. It benefits European industries as a whole as well as European consumers, and constitutes a real basis on which to negotiate further market-opening measures in the future.?

Basic telecommunications services: résultats of the WTO negotiations

The Committee adopted the report drawn up under the consultation procedure proposing that Parliament approve the outcome of the World Trade Organisation negotiations on basic telecommunications services. The fourth GATT protocol was adopted in Geneva on 15 February 1997. It was signed by 69 of the 130 WTO member states, representing 95% of the world market in the telecommunications industry, which is

valued at 600 billion dollars per annum. For the EU, ratification of the GATT agreement will mean that liberalisation of the internal telecoms market will be subject to the rules laid down by the WTO, which, however, has agreed to allow the rules to be implemented gradually for countries where the networks are small or not fully developed, i.e. Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Greece and Spain. The exclusion of the broadcasting sector from the agreement - despite resistance from the United States - means that EU Member States are not obliged to grant access to all programmes (especially in new areas such as video-on demand) supplied by other countries, such as the USA, which already accounts for 80% of the European broadcasting market. In conclusion, the committee drew attention to the following points: - the confused institutional arrangements in the foreign trade sphere, and the urgent need to amend the relevant legislation; - the need to . monitor implementation of the general principles laid down by the WTO; . assess the impact of the GATT agreements on developing countries and adopt special measures to ensure that they are not placed in an excessively difficult position; . consider the possible repercussions of the restrictions attached to the offers put forward by many countries (particularly the US) in a wide range of sectors, which have led to a blatant lack of reciprocity vis-à-vis the European Union; . clarify various aspects of the negotiations which remain rather unclear as far as broadcasting services are concerned. ?

Basic telecommunications services: résultats of the WTO negotiations

Adopting the report by Mrs Luciana CASTELLINA (GUE/NGL, I), the European Parliament approved the conclusion, on behalf of the Community, as regards matters within its competence, of the results of the WTO negotiations on basic telecommunications services.?

Basic telecommunications services: résultats of the WTO negotiations

OBJECTIVE: to approve, on behalf of the Community, the results of the World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations on basic telecommunications services. COMMUNITY MEASURE: Council Decision 97/838/EC concerning the conclusion, on behalf of the European Community, as regards matters within its competence, of the results of the WTO negotiations on basic telecommunications services. SUBSTANCE: Following the negotiations between the Community and its WTO partners, a fourth protocol to the General Agreement on Trade in Services was concluded on 15.02.1997, as was a decision of the Council for Trade in Services on commitments in basic telecommunications. A previous decision called on WTO partners to draw up a list of specific commitments and exemptions concerning basic telecommunications services. The list notably included the Community's commitments in this respect. At the end of the negotiations, the total level of bilateral commitments represented a cover of some 93% of the world market in basic telecommunications services. These commitments concerned all subsectors of basic telecommunications services and were applicable immediately or in stages. Other commitments concerned regulatory principles. As regards the Community, the Agreement permits the Union's telecommunications industry to enjoy a more secure legal status and greater predictability. The European industry as a whole and European consumers will benefit from the Agreement, which provides a basis for the negotiation of other measures to open up markets in the future. ENTRY INTO FORCE: The protocol enters into force on 01.01.1998 on condition that it has been accepted by all the members concerned.?